

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 FILE-01 /012 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/ S- O: JMCGUNNIGLE

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O 031800 Z APR 73 ZFF6

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

INFO USDEL SAN CLEMENTE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 061047

EXDIS TOSEC 106

WHITE HOUSE PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY ROGERS IN SAN
CLEMENTS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE SECDEF INFO BANGKOK SAIGON VIENTIANE
CINCPAC CJCS COMUSSAG FROM PHNOM PENH APR 3

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 3110

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, CB

SUBJECT: FANK PERFORMANCE

REF: STATE 060304/022058 Z APRIL 73 (NOTAL)

1. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HAD A GREATER CLUSTER OF
INCIDENTS OF FANK GENERAL RESERVE UNITS REFUSING BATTLE
OR BREAKING UNDER FIRE SINCE JANUARY, AS YOU ARE
WELL AWARE, THIS IS BY NO MEANS A NEW PHENOMENON IN
FANK. INDIFFERENT LEADERSHIP, PAYROLL PADDING, PAYROLL
IRREGULARITIES AND VARIOUS SUPPLY PROBLEMS ALL PLAY
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A ROLE AS UNDERLYING FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR SUCH INCIDENTS.

2. WE THINK THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE APPARENT INCREASE (OR AT LEAST BUNCHING) OF SUCH INCIDENTS

(A) A GROWING REALIZATION THAT THE ENEMY IS MAINLY KHMER, NOT VIETNAMESE, COMBINED WITH THE RELUCTANCE TO FIGHT OTHER KHMER;
(B) DECAY OF RESPECT FOR LON NOL, AS HE HAS BECOME MORE REMOTE FROM THE AVERAGE SOLDIER AND AS HIS REGIME HAS APPEARED LESS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONCERNS OF ORDINARY KHMER;
(C) WAR WEARINESS OF THE JQMY WHOSE HOPES TO GO HOME SOARED WITH THDGGKR' S DECLARATION OF UNILATERAL CESSATION OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS;
(D) THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE A GREATLY INCREASED WEIGHT OF ENEMY INDIRECT FIRE ON FANK POSITIONS;
(E) THE RAPID AND SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN US STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL AIR OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA ALTHOUGH ESENTIAL MAY HAVE GIVEN SOME UNITS IN THE FIELD A CRUTCH THAT THEY NOW FEEL THEY CANNOT DO WITHOUT. THUS, WHEN US AIR IS NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE, SOME FANK UNITS BELIEVE HAT THEY CANNOT BE SUCCESSFUL IN A COMZJT SITUATION. TWO INCIDENTS ARE RECORDED IN WHICH FANK FORCES RETREATED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE US FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER LEFT THE AREA TO BE REFUELED.

3. LOOKING AT THE PRESENT AND AHEAD, WE BELIEVE THAT THYPOLITINWL CRISIS IN PHNOM PENH MAY WELL BE HAVING WDMAJOR IMPACT ON FANK MORALE. AS DEFENSE MINISTER MAJGEN THAPPANA NGINN TOLD US LAST NIGHT, MANY FANK SOLDIERS DO NOT NOW REALLY KNOW FOR WHAT OR FOR WHOM THEY ARE FIGHTING. WE ARE ASKING OURSELVES W RTHET WE ARE NOT OBSERVING A DETERIORATION OF FANK EFFECTIVENESS CHICH COULD GATHER DANGEROUS MOMENTUM. SUCH A BREAKING UP IS POSSIBLE IF THE SITUATION ON THE MEKONG IS NOT RESTORED AND IF THE LONG STRING OF RECENT REVERSES IS NOT ARRESTED.
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4. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE FIGHTING CAPABILITY OF THE SECOND AND SEVENTH DIVISIONS OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. AS ALWAYS, THE SECOND DIVISION IS SERIOUSLY UNDER STRENGTH, AND THIS IS A MAJOR CONSTRAINT ON ITS EFFECTIVENESS. THE AMBUSH OF THE SEVENTH DIVISION BELOW CHAMBAK NEED NOT DEPRIVE THE PDOS ELITE UNIT OF ITS COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS IN THE FUTURE, AND DAO OFFICERS WHO HAD THE CLOSEST CONTACT WITH IT ARE RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC. BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IT WILL TAKE A MAJOR EFFORT OF LEADERSHIP TO GET THE SEVENTH BACK INTO GOOD FIGHTING TRIM IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND ALTHOUGH WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE, WE SHOULD NOT SUPPOSE THAT EITHER THE SEVENTH, OR ABOVE ALL THE SECOND, WHOSE COMMANDER BRIGGEN DIEN DEL HAS SHOWN LITTLE APPETITE FOR THE STRUGGLE FOR SOME TIME, ARE IMMUNE TO THE GENERAL DEMORALIZING FACTORS LISTED ABOVE.
SWANK
UNQUOTE RUSH

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